

The Gap Theory

Affirmed

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When we consider the issue of a time period between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 it is important to understand that such gaps are not uncommon to the Bible. Another example of such a gap is in Isaiah 61:1, 2 (*c.f.* Luke 4:19). In this passage in Isaiah we have the first and second comings of Christ spoken of as if no time had lapsed. While in fact, we now know, a simple comma in verse two represents a 2,000+ year period.

The gap in question (Genesis 1:1, 2) has, at times, over the years, become a very debated issue, with some believers actually being unkind and ungracious in their attitudes toward one another over it. It is important for us not to become disturbed because another believer *holds to or does not hold to* the “gap.”

What I would like to present to you are some of the things which have led me to the conclusion that there is a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Before proceeding, it is important to understand that I do not hold to any “evolutionary process.” Some opponents of the “gap” have attempted to make the issue one of “orthodoxy.” They seek to paint those who hold to the “gap” as standing against the fundamental tenets of creation, or at least succumbing to the weight of evolutionary thinking. The idea is communicated that the “gap” theory is a recent attempt to reconcile evolutionistic thought with that of the Bible. I do not feel *any* need to make Scripture harmonize with current Pseudo-Scientific thought (I Tim. 6:20)!

It might help you to understand that I was raised with the “gap theory” and it is my experience that it is held by many believers, at least throughout the “Bible Belt.” It is also a position that has been held by prominent dispensationalists such as C.I. Scofield, Clarence Larkin, George Williams and E.W. Bullinger. Contrary to what some would have you believe, it has also been held by some within the Scientific community. In fact, the largest work on this subject (for either position) was written by a research scientist named Arthur C. Custance. His work entitled “*Without Form and Void*” demonstrates that the “gap” view was a view held through the centuries.

I. THE ISSUE OF THE GAP THEORY STATED

Genesis 1:1 is the record of the original creation. Lucifer and other “angelic” beings were part of this creation (Job 3 8:4-7 – the “son of God” being a reference to direct creation – *c.f.* Job 1:6; 2:1; Genesis 6:2, 4).

Lucifer was given “dominion” or “kingship” of the Earth. He was created perfect and with great light and beauty; but sin was found in him – the sin of pride (Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12-20).

Between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 there was a Satanic rebellion to invade heaven which produced divine judgement upon creation. God in His six day act restored the creation and introduced the Adamic race – His plan for the re-establishment of divine authority on the earth.

II. THE REASON FOR THE GAP CONSIDERED

A possible reason for the “gap” is that the Bible is primarily a book dealing with man. God’s purpose is not served by “dealing” with the subject of Satanic rebellion at this point in recorded Scripture, but the context presents sufficient cause for thoughtful consideration of a gap, especially when linked with subsequent revelation.

III. A LOOK AT THE GAP IN LIGHT OF OTHER PASSAGES

Isaiah 14

In this passage we find a study of the Antichrist’s fall. In the midst of this fall, there is a mocking of Lucifer’s fall, which reveals the Satanic policy of evil (:12-15). We notice in this passage that:

- Lucifer had a “Throne,” thus he was a king with subjects. Hence his title “*the god (magistrate) of this world*” (II Corinthians 4:4) and “*the prince (chief magistrate) of the power (jurisdiction) of the air*” (*i.e.*, supreme land and air commander).

C.f. Luke 4:5-8 and notice that Satan’s *right* to offer “*all the kingdoms of the world*” goes unchallenged by Jesus Christ.

- His dominion was on Earth (he invades heaven from below the clouds and the stars).

Ezekiel 28

This passage is like the one in Isaiah 14. Notice the description of Lucifer in Eden. The description of him given here does not match the one found in the “Adamic Eden.”

The Nature of the Original Creation was *perfect* and not “*without form and void.*”

“He is the Rock, His work is PERFECT: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deuteronomy 32:4).

*“For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, he **created it not in vain**, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.” (Isaiah 45:18)*

The word “vain” found in this last verse is Strong’s #H8414 and is the exact word translated “without form” in Genesis 1:2. So the Lord did *not* create the heaven and the earth “without form and void,” but it became so by satanic iniquity and Divine judgement.

Psalm 104

The context of this Psalm is the subject of creation. In this chapter there is a reference to a flood, to “the deep” (:6, 7). Yet the description does not match that of the Noahic flood. There is no record of the waters of Noah’s day fleeing and hastening away at His rebuke. Rather, that flood was a *continual* decreasing process of 157 days.

Also consider II Peter 3:4-7. Which flood is this? Did the Noahic flood change the heavens also?

IV. THE CONTEXTUAL REASONS FOR THE GAP

The word “AND” throughout the passage

- They are “ands” of addition (then, next), not “ands” of explanation (“even”).

Every verse in chapter one, with the exception of 1 and 27 all begin with the word “and.” Some 148 times in chapter 1 & 2 the word “and” is used as an additional statement.

Continuing with this consistency, Genesis 1:2 is not a statement of explanation of 1:1, but one of addition.

- The nature of the term “WITHOUT FORM AND VOID.”

The only other reference to this phrase is a description of the Divine Judgement upon the Satanic plan of evil (Jeremiah 4:23).

- The meaning of the Word “EARTH.”

The meaning of the word Earth is “dry land.” In Genesis 1:2 the earth (“dry land”) of 1:1 is now “wet land” and remains so until 1:10 when God removes the water and restores the earth (“dry land”). What happened to the “earth” (“dry land”) of 1:1?

- The Biblical significance of the word “DARKNESS.”

In Scripture the word “darkness” is a sign of divine judgement (Examples: Exodus 10:21-23; Isaiah 5:30; 13:9, 10; Jeremiah 4:23-26; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 1:14-15; Joel 2:31; 3:15; Matthew 8:12; 27:45-46).

This explains why there is a re-entrance of “light” in verse 3 (*i.e.*, Divine presence), while the “lights” (the sun, moon and stars) do not show up until verse 14.

- The language of REDEMPTION that is used.

Paul associates this passage with the operation of salvation (*c.f.* II Corinthians 4:3-6). Paul, by divine inspiration, declared Genesis 1:1-3 to be an illustration of the work of redemption.

- The Adamic commission – “REPLENISH”

God told Adam to replenish the Earth (Genesis 1:28). This word replenish is:

- » RE – denoting a return, repetition or iteration (recital or performing over again), and
- » PLENUS – denoting a filling or fullness.
- » Every other occurrence of this word “replenish” has in its view that of “plenishing” again – *i.e.*, re-plentify (special note should be made of its use in Genesis 9:1; water had just covered the Earth *again* – *c.f.* Isaiah 2:6; 23:2; Jeremiah 31:25; Ezekiel 2:2; 27:25).

- The Adamic commission – “SUBDUE”

God told Adam to subdue the earth. There is an enemy in view! Webster defines the word subdue as meaning, “to conquer by force.” Who or what is the enemy?

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